

P240
Am 32
No 25

No. 25.

HAVE WE ANY NEED OF THE BIBLE.

RELIGION consists of the knowledge of a number of great facts, and a course of life suitable to them. We have seen three of these: that God created the world; that He governs it; and that He is able to conquer His enemies. There are others of the same sort as needful to be known. Our knowledge of these facts, or our ignorance of them, makes not the slightest difference in the facts themselves. God is, and heaven is, and hell is, and sin leads to it, whether any body believes these things or not. It makes no sort of difference in the beetling cliff and swollen flood that sweeps below it, that the drunken man declares there is no danger, and refusing the proffered lantern, gallops on toward it in the darkness of the night. But when the mangled corpse is washed ashore, every one sees how foolish this man was to be so confident in his ignorance as to refuse the lantern, which would have shown him his danger, and guided him to the bridge where he might have crossed in safety. Some of the facts of religion lie at the evening end of life's journey—the darkness of death's night hides them from mortal eye—living men might guide their steps the better by asking counsel of one who knows the way. If they get along no better by their own counsel in the next world, than most of them do in this, they will have small cause to bless their teacher. Who can tell that ignorance, and wickedness, and wretchedness are not as tightly tied together in the world to come, as we see them here?

Solomon was a knowing man and wise: and better than that in the esteem of most people, he made money, and tells you how to make it and keep it. You will make a hundred dollars by reading his Proverbs and acting on them. They would have saved some of you many a thousand. Of course such a man knew something of the world. He was a wide awake trader. His ships coasted the shores of Asia and Africa, from Madagascar to Japan; and the overland mail caravans, from India and China, drew up in the depots he built for them in the heart of the desert. He knew the well-doing people with whom trade was profitable, and the savages who could only send apes and peacocks. He was a philosopher as well as a trader, and could not help being deeply impressed with *the great fact*, that there was a wide difference among the nations of the

world. Some were enlightened, enterprising, civilized, and flourishing; others were naked savages, living in ignorance, poverty, vice, and starvation, perpetually murdering one another, and dying out off the earth.

Solomon noticed *another great fact*. In his own country, and in Chaldea, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and some others, God had revealed His will to certain persons for the benefit of their neighbors. He did so generally by opening the eyes of these prophets to see future events, and the great facts of the unseen world, and by giving them messages of warning and instruction to the nations. From this mode of revelation, by opening the prophets' eyes to see realities invisible to others, they were called seers, and the revelations they were commissioned to make were called visions; and revelation from God was called in general vision. Solomon was struck with the fact that some nations were thus favored by God, and other nations were not. The questions would naturally arise, Why this difference? What difference does it make, or does it make any difference, whether men have any revelation of God's will or not?

Solomon was led to observe a *third great fact*. The nations which were favored with these revelations were the civilized, enterprising, and comparatively prosperous nations. In proportion to the amount of divine revelation they had, and their obedience to it, they prospered. The nations that had no revelation from God were the idolatrous savages, who were sinking down to the level of brutes, and perishing off the face of the earth. He daguerreotypes these three great facts in the Proverb: "Where there is no vision the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

O, says the Rationalist, the world is wiser now than it was in Solomon's days. He lived in the old mythological period, when men attributed every thing extraordinary to the gods. But the world is too wise now to believe in any supernatural revelation. "The Hebrew and Christian religions like all others have their myths." "The fact is, the pure historic idea was never developed among the Hebrews during the whole of their political existence." "When, therefore, we meet with an account of certain phenomena, or events of which it is expressly stated or implied that they were produced immediately by God himself, (such as divine apparitions, voices from heaven, and the like,) or by human beings possessed of supernatural powers, (miracles, prophecies, etc.,) such an

account is so far to be considered not historical." "Indeed, no just notion of the true nature of history is possible without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite causes, and of the impossibility of miracles."* A narrative is to be deemed mythical, 1st, "When it proceeds from an age in which there were no written records, but events were transmitted by tradition; 2d, When it presents as historical, accounts of events which were beyond the reach of experience, as occurrences connected with the spiritual world; or 3d, When it deals in the marvelous, and is couched in symbolical language."† So also De Wette, and Schelling, and Gabler, and a host of others, who pass for biblical expositors, lay it down as an axiom, that all records of supernatural events are mythical, viz.: fables, falsehoods, because miracles are impossible. Of course, from such premises the conclusion is easy. A revelation from God to man is a supernatural event, and supernatural events are impossible; therefore, a revelation from God is impossible. But it would have been much easier, and quite as logical, to have laid down the axiom in plain words at first, that a revelation from God is impossible, as to argue it from such premises; for it is just as easy to say, that a revelation from God is impossible, as to say that miracles are impossible; and as for *proof* of either one or the other, we must just take their word for it.

One cannot help being amazed at the cool impudence with which these men take for granted the very point to be proved, and set aside, as unworthy of serious examination, the most authentic records of history, simply because they do not coincide with their so-called philosophy; and at the credulity with which their followers swallow this arrogant dogmatism, as if it were self-evident truth. Let us look at it for a moment. Other religions have their myths, or fables, therefore, the Hebrew and Christian records are fables, says the Rationalist. Profundity of logic! Counterfeit bank bills are common, therefore none are genuine. "The fact is, the pure historic idea was never developed among the Hebrews," *i. e.*, Moses and the prophets were all liars. That is the fact, you may take my word for it. "Indeed, no just notion of the true nature of history is possible without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite causes, and of the impossibility of miracles,"—which translated into plain words is simply this: No man can understand

* Straus' Life of Jesus, 64, 74, 87.

† Bauer's Hebrew Mythology.

history who believes in God Almighty. "A narrative is to be deemed fabulous when it proceeds from an age in which there were no written records," such, for instance, as any account of the creation of the first man—for no event could possibly happen unless there was a scribe there to write it. Or, of the fall of man—we do not know that Adam was able to write, and no man can tell truth unless he writes a history. "A narrative is to be deemed fabulous when it presents as historical, accounts of events which were beyond the reach of experience, as events connected with the spiritual world." Is it not self-evident that you and I have had experience of every thing in the whole universe, and whoever tells us any thing which we have never seen is a liar. "When a narrative deals in the marvelous," such as Xenophon's Retreat of the Ten Thousand, Herodotus' narratives of the battles of Marathon and Thermopylæ, or Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, dealing as it does in such marvelous accounts as the death of half the inhabitants of the Empire in the reign of Galerius, or any other history of any wonderful occurrence—it is of course a myth. Does not every one know that nothing marvelous ever happened, or if it did, would any historian trouble himself to record a prodigy? "Or, if it is couched in symbolical language," as is every eloquent passage in Thucydides, Robertson, Gibbon, or Guizot, the records of China, and of India, the picture-writing of the Peruvians, and especially the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which were fondly expected to do such good service against the Bible—must be at once rejected, without further examination, as mythological and unworthy of any credit whatever. Thus we are conclusively rid for ever of the Bible, for sure enough it is couched in symbolical language. Blessed deliverance to the world! But then, alas! this great deliverance is accompanied with several little inconveniences. All poetry, three-fourths of the world's history, and the largest part of its philosophy, is couched in symbolical language, and especially the whole of the science of metaphysics, from which these very learned writers have deduced such edifying conclusions, is, from the beginning to the end, nothing but a symbolical application of the terms which describe material objects, to the phenomena of mind. Alas! we must for ever relinquish "the absolute," and "the infinite," and "the conditioned," with all their "affinities and potencies," up to "the higher unity," and "the rhythm of universal existence," and all the rest of those perspicuous German hiero-

glyphics, whether entombed in their native pyramids for the amazement of succeeding generations, by Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel, or "worshipping in the great cathedral of the immensities," "with their heads uplifted into infinite space," or "lying on the plane of their own consciousness," in the writings of Carlyle, Emerson, and Parker. They are myths, the whole of them, for they "are couched in symbolical language,"—and Bauer, De Wette, and Strauss have pronounced every thing couched in symbolical language to be mythical. Let us henceforth deliver our minds from all anxiety about history, philosophy, or religion, and stick to the price current and the multiplication table, the only accounts that are not "couched in symbolical language."

Such is the sort of trash which passes for profound philosophy when once it is made unintelligible, and such are the canons of interpretation with which men calling themselves philosophers and Christians sit down to investigate the claims of the Bible as a revelation from God. If they would speak out their true sentiments, they would say, "There cannot be any revelation from God, because there is no God." But they could not call themselves professors of Christian colleges, and pastors of Congregational churches, and reap the emoluments of such situations, if they would honestly avow their Atheism. Besides the world would see too plainly the drift of their teaching; therefore it is cloaked under a profession of belief in God, the Creator, who however is to be carefully prevented from ever showing himself again in the world he has made.

No proof is attempted for the declaration that miracles are impossible. Yet, surely, if it implies a contradiction to say so, that contradiction could be shown. That it is not self-evident is shown by the general belief of mankind that miracles have occurred. No man who believes in a supernatural being, can deny the possibility of supernatural actings. The creation of the world is the most stupendous of all miracles, utterly beyond the power of any finite causes, and entirely beyond the reach of our experience, yet these men admit that this miracle occurred. Supernatural events then are not impossible, nor unprecedented.

The vain notion that God, having created the world at first, left it for ever after to the operation of natural laws, is conclusively demolished by the discoveries of geology. These discoveries establish the fact recorded in Scripture, that in bringing the world into

its present form there were several distinct and successive interpositions of supernatural power, in the distinct and successive creations of different species of vegetable and animal life. In former periods the earth was so warm that the present races of men and animals could not have lived on it, and the plants and animals of that age could not live now. These very men are profuse in proving that the earth existed for ages before *man* made his appearance upon it. This being the case, we are compelled to acknowledge the creating power of a God above the laws of nature, for there is no law of nature which can either create a new species of plants or animals—nor yet change one kind into another—make an oak into a larch, or an ox into a sheep, or a goose into a turkey, or a megatherium into an elephant—much less into a man. Some men have dreamed of such changes as these, but no instance of such a change has ever been alleged in proof of the notion. The most distinguished anatomists and geologists are fully agreed that no such change of one animal into another ever took place; much less that any animal ever was changed into a man. Lyell says at the conclusion of four chapters devoted to an investigation of the subject: “From the above considerations it appears that species have a real existence in nature, and that each was endowed at the time of its creation, with the attributes and organization by which it is now distinguished.”* Cuvier, from his comprehensive survey of the fossils of former periods, establishes the fact, “that the species now living are not mere varieties of the species which are lost.” And Agassiz says, “I have the conviction that species have been created successively, at distinct intervals.”† Revelations of God’s special interpositions in the affairs of this world are thus written by his own finger in the fossils and coal, and engraved on the everlasting granite of the earth’s foundation stones. Dumb beasts and dead reptiles start forward to give their irrefutable testimony to the repeated supernatural acts of their Creator in this world which he had made. Every distinct species of plants and animals is proof of a distinct supernatural overruling of the present laws of nature. The experience of man is not the limit of knowledge. His own existence is a proof that the chain of finite causes is not inviolable. Geology sweeps away the very foundations of scepticism, by demon-

* Elements of Geology, page 611, 9th edition.

† See Pearson on Infidelity, page 93, 40th edition.

strating that certain phenomena produced immediately by God himself—the phenomena of the creation of life—have occurred repeatedly in the history of our globe. Revelation is not impossible because supernatural. The world is just as full of supernatural works as of natural. Nor is it incredible because it records miracles. The miracles recorded in the coal measures are as astonishing as any recorded in the Bible.

The Spiritualist next advances to assure us, that any external revelation from God to man is *useless*, because man is wise enough without it. The vulgar exposition of this sentiment is familiar to every reader. "You need not begin to preach Bible to me. I know my duty well enough without the Bible." The more educated attempt to reason the matter after this fashion: "Miraculous phenomena will never prove the goodness and veracity of God, if we do not know these qualities in him without a miracle."* We may remark in passing, that there are some other attributes of God besides goodness and veracity—holiness and justice for instance, which are proved by miracles. "Can thunder from the thirty-two azimuths, repeated daily for centuries, make God's laws more god-like to me? Brother, no. Perhaps I am grown to be a man now, and do not need the thunder and the terror any longer. Perhaps I am above being frightened. Perhaps it is not fear but reverence that shall now lead me! Revelation! Inspirations! And thy own god-created soul, dost thou not call that a revelation?"† It is manifest however, that if Mr. Carlyle needs not the Sinai thunder to assure him that the law given on Sinai was from God, there were then, and are now many who do, and some of his own sect who doubt in spite of it. If he is above the weakness of fearing God, all the world is not so.

The claims of a divine teacher are as unceremoniously rejected as those of a divine revelation. "If it depends on Jesus it is not eternally true, and if it is not eternally true it is no truth at all," says Parker. As if eternally true and sufficiently known were just the same thing; or as if because vaccination would always have prevented the small-pox, the world is under no obligation to Jenner for informing us of the fact. In the same strain Emerson despises instruction: "It is not instruction but provocation that I can receive from another soul. What he announces, I must find

* Newman's Phases of Faith, 157.

† Carlyle's Past and Present, 307.

true in me, or wholly reject; and on his word, or as his second, be he who he may, I can accept nothing." Again says Parker, "Christianity is dependent on no outside authority. We verify its eternal truth in our soul."* His aim is "to separate religion from whatever is finite—church, book, person—and let it rest on its absolute truth."† "It bows to no idols, neither the church, nor the Bible, nor yet Jesus, but God only: its Redeemer is within: its salvation within: its heaven and its oracle of God."‡ The whole strain of this school of writers and their disciples is one of depreciation of external revelation, and of exaltation of the inner light which every man is supposed to carry within him. Religion is "no Morison's pill from without," but a "clearing of the inner light," a "re-awakening of our own selves from within."§ So Mr. Newman|| abundantly argues that an authoritative book revelation of moral and spiritual truth is impossible—that God reveals himself within us and not without us—and that a revelation of all moral and religious truth necessary for us to know is to be obtained by *insight* or gazing into the depths of our own consciousness. The sum of the whole business is, that neither God or man can reveal any religious truth to our minds, or as Parker felicitously expresses it, "on his word, or as his second, be he who he may, I can accept nothing."

Now, we are tempted to ask, who are these wonderful prodigies, so incapable of receiving instruction from any body? And to our amazement we learn, that some forty odd years ago they made their appearance among mankind as little squalling babies, without insight enough to know their own names, or where they came from, and were actually dependent on an external revelation, from their nurses, for sense enough to find their mothers' breasts. And as they grew a little larger, they obtained the power of speaking articulate sounds by external revelation: hearing and imitating the sounds made by others. Further, upon a memorable day, they had a "book revelation" made to them, in the shape of a penny primer, and were initiated into the mysteries of A, B, C, by "the instructions of another, be he who he may." There was absolutely not the least "insight," or "spiritual faculty," or "self-consciousness," in one of them, by which they then could, or ever to this hour did "find true within them" any sort of necessary connection

* Discourse on Religion, page 209.

† Carlyle's Past and Present, 312,

‡ Ib. page 37.

§ The Soul Passive, page 342.

|| Ib. page 359.

between the signs, c, a, t,—d, o, g,—and the sounds *cat*, *dog*, or any other sounds represented by any other letters of the alphabet. Faith in the word of their teachers is absolutely the sole foundation and only source of their ability to read and write. On "the word of another, and as his second, be he who he may," every one of them has accepted every intelligible word he speaks or writes.

And this is not half of their indebtedness to external revelation. For they will not deny that a Feejee cannibal has just the same "insight," "spiritual faculty," "mighty and transcendent soul," "self-consciousness," or any other name by which they may dignify our common humanity, which they themselves possess. How does it happen, then, that these writers, and all the rest of our Spiritualists, are not assembled around the cannibal's oven, smearing their faces with the blood, and feasting themselves on the limbs of women and children? The inner nature of the cannibal and the spiritualist is the same: whence comes the difference of character and conduct? And the inner light, too, is the same; for they assure us that "inspiration, like God's omnipresence, is coextensive with the race." Is it not, after all, mere external revelation, in the shape of education—aye, and moral and religious teaching—that makes the whole difference between the civilized American and his inspired Feejee brother?

These gentlemen not only acknowledge, but try to repay their obligations to external revelation. As it is impossible for God to give the world a book revelation of moral and religious truth, they modestly propose to come to his assistance, it being quite possible for some men to do what it is impossible for God. Accordingly, we have a book revelation of moral and religious truth, from one, in his treatise on *The Soul*, an "external revelation" from another, in his *Discourse concerning religion*, a "Morison's pill from the outside," from a third, in his *Past and Present*, and "announcements" from a fourth, which assuredly the great mass of mankind never "found true within them," else his orations and publications had not been needed to convert them. It is to be understood, then, that an "external revelation," or a "book revelation" of spiritual truth is impossible, only when it comes from God, but that these gentlemen have proved it quite possible for themselves to deliver one.

In so doing they have undoubtedly attempted to meet the wishes

of the greater part of mankind, who have in all lands and in all ages longed for some outward revelation from God, and testified their desire by running after all sorts of omens, auguries, and oracles, consulting witches, and treasuring Sibylline leaves, employing writing mediums, and listening to spirit rappers. The "inspiration which is limited to no sect, age, or nation—which is wide as the world, and common as God,"* has never produced a nation of Spiritualists: a fact very unaccountable, if Spiritualism be true, and one which might well lead these writers to acknowledge at least one kind of total depravity, namely, that inspired men should love the darkness of external revelations, and even of book revelations, and read Bibles, and Korans, and Vedas, and "Discourses concerning religion," and "Phases of Faith," while yet "every thing that is of use to man, lies in the plane of our own consciousness."† Surely, such a universal craving after an external revelation testifies to a felt necessity for it, and renders it probable, or at least desirable, that God would supply the deficiency. Is the religious appetite the only one for which God has provided no supply?

But we are instructed, that, "as we have bodily senses to lay hold on matter, and supply bodily wants, through which we obtain naturally all needed material things, so we have spiritual faculties to lay hold on God, and supply spiritual wants: through them we obtain all needed spiritual things." That we have both bodily senses and spiritual faculties, is doubtless true; but whether either the one or the other obtain all needed things, is somewhat doubtful. I cannot tell how it is with mankind in Boston, for I am not there; and this being a matter in which religious truth is concerned, Mr. Emerson will not allow me to receive instruction about it from any other soul; but I see from my window a poor widow, with five children, who has bodily senses to lay hold on matter, and supply bodily wants; yet in my opinion she has not obtained naturally all needed material things; and if there be a truth which lies emphatically in the plane of her own consciousness, it is, that she is in great need of a cord of wood, and a barrel of flour, for her starving children. I know, also, a man, to whom God gave bodily senses to lay hold on matter, and supply bodily wants, who, by his drunkenness, has destroyed these bodily

* Parker's Discourse, 171.

† Ibid, 33.

senses, and brought his family to utter destitution of all needed material things. From one cause or another, I find multitudes here in poverty and destitution, notwithstanding they have bodily senses. It is reported, also, that there is a poor house in Boston, and poverty in Ireland, and starvation in Madeira, and famine in the inundated provinces of France, and misery and destitution in London; which, if true, completely overturns this beautiful theory. For, if, notwithstanding the possession of bodily senses, men do starve in this world for want of needful food and clothing, it is very possible that they may have spiritual faculties also, and yet not obtain through them all needed spiritual things. The second part of the theory is as baseless as the first. All men have spiritual faculties, and have not by them obtained all needed spiritual things. They have not in their own opinion, and surely they are competent judges of "what lies wholly in the plane of their own consciousness."

In proof of the fact that mankind have not, in their own opinion, obtained all needed spiritual things by the use of their spiritual faculties, without the aid of external revelation, we appeal to all the religions of mankind, Heathen, Mahomedan, and Christian. Every one of these appeals to revelations from God. Every law-giver of note professed to have communication with heaven, Zoroaster, Minos, Pythagoras, Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, Mahomed, down to the chief of the present revolution in China. "Whatever becomes of the real truth of these relations," says Strabo of those before his day, "*it is certain that men did believe and think them true.*" If mankind had found the supply of all their spiritual wants within themselves, would they have clung in this way to the pretence of external revelations? Is not the abundance of quack doctors conclusive proof of the existence of disease and the need of physicians?

Not only was the need of an external revelation of some sort acknowledged by all mankind, but the insufficiency of the pretended oracles which they enjoyed was deplored by the wisest part of them. We never find men amidst the dim moonlight of tradition and the light of nature, vaunting the sufficiency of their inward light; it is only amidst the full blaze of noon-day Christianity, that philosophers can stand up and declare that they have no need of God's teaching. Had such men lived in Athens of old, they would have found men possessed of spiritual faculties, and those of

no mean order, engaged in erecting an altar with this inscription, "*To the Unknown God.*" One of the wisest of the heathen (Socrates) acknowledged that he could attain to no certainty respecting religious truth or moral duty, in these memorable words, "We must of necessity wait, till some one from Ilion who careth for us, shall come and instruct us how we ought to behave towards God and toward man." The chief of the Academy, whose philosophy concerning the eternity of matter occupies a conspicuous place in the creed of American heathens, had no such confidence in the sufficiency of his own powers of discovering religious truth. "We cannot know of ourselves what petition will be pleasing to God, or what worship we should pay to him; but it is necessary that a lawgiver should be sent from heaven to instruct us." "Oh how greatly do I long to see that man!" He further declares that "*this lawgiver must be more than man, that he may teach us the things man can not know by his own nature.*"* Whether this want of a revelation from God, was real or merely imaginary, will appear by a brief review of the opinions and practices of those who never enjoyed, and of those who reject the light of God's revelation.

They knew not God. If there is any article of religion fundamental and indispensable to its very existence, it is the knowledge of God. It is admitted by Spiritualists that the spiritual faculties are designed to lay hold on God. It has been proved in the two former tracts of this series, and will be admitted by all but Atheists, that God is an intelligent being. And further it has been proved that God is not every thing and every body, but distinct from and supreme over all his works. Besides, in this country at least, there will not be much difference of opinion as to the propriety of a rational being adoring a brute, or a log of wood, or a lump of stone. It will be allowed that such stupidity shows both ignorance and folly. Now let us enquire into the knowledge of God possessed by the people who have no vision.

The Chaldeans, the most ancient people of whom we have any account, and who had among them the immediate descendants of Noah, and whatever traditions of Noah's prophecies they preserved, were probably the best instructed of the heathen. Yet we find that they gave up the worship of God, adored the sun, and moon, and stars of heaven, and in process of time degenerated still fur-

* Plato. Republic. Books IV and VI., and Alcibiades II.

ther, and worshiped dumb idols. From this rock we were hewn; the common names of the days of the week, and especially of the first day of the week, will for ever keep up a testimony to the necessity of that revelation which delivered our forefathers and us from burning our children upon the devil's altars on Sun-days.

The Egyptians were reputed the most learned of mankind, and Egypt was considered the cradle of the arts and sciences. In her existing monuments, hieroglyphic inscriptions, and tomb paintings, we have presented to us the materials for forming a more correct opinion of the religion and life of the Egyptians, than of any other ancient people; and the investigation of these monuments is still adding to our information. Infidel writers and lecturers have not hesitated to allege that Moses merely taught the Israelites the religion of Egypt; and some have had the hardihood to allege that the ten commandments are found written on the pyramids, as an argument against the necessity of a revelation. If the statement were true, it would by no means prove the conclusion. Egypt was favored with divine revelations to several of her kings, and enjoyed occasional visits from, or the permanent teachings of such prophets as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, for four hundred years—a fact quite sufficient to account for her superiority to other heathen nations, as well as for the existence of some traces of true religion on her monuments. But the alleged fact is a falsehood. Some good moral precepts are found on the Egyptian monuments, but the ten commandments are not there. It may be charitably supposed that those who allege the contrary never learned the ten commandments, or have forgotten them, else they would have remembered that the first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and that the second is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," etc., and would have paused before alleging that these commands were engraved upon the very temples of idols, and by the priests of the birds and beasts and creeping things which they adored. It is very doubtful if they believed in the existence of one supreme God, as most of the heathen did; but if they did, "they did not under any form, symbol, or hieroglyphic, represent the idea of the unity of God," as is fully proved by Wilkinson.* On the contrary, the monuments confirm the satirical sketch of the poet,† as to the "monsters mad Egypt

* Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians, 2d series, vol. ii., page 176, et passim.

† Juvenal, Satire XV.

worshipped: here a sea-fish, there a river-fish; whole towns adore a dog. This place fears an ibis saturated with serpents; that adores a crocodile. It is a sin to violate a leek or onion, or break them with a bite." Cruel wars were waged between different towns, as Plutarch tells us, because the people of Cynopolis would eat a fish held sacred by the citizens of Latopolis. Bulls, and dogs, and cats, and rats, and reptiles, and dung beetles, were devoutly adored by the learned Egyptians. A Roman soldier, who had accidentally killed one of their gods, a cat, was put to death for sacrilege.* Whenever a dog died, every person in the house went into mourning, and fasted till night. So low had the "great, the mighty and transcendent soul," been degraded, that there is a picture extant of one of the kings of Egypt worshipping his own coffin! Such is man's knowledge of God without a revelation from Him.

The Greeks, from their early intercourse with Egypt, borrowed from them most of their religion; but by later connections with the Hebrews about the time of Aristotle and Alexander, they gathered a few grains of truth to throw into the heap of error. After the translation of the Scriptures into Greek, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, any of their philosophers who desired, might easily have learned the knowledge of the true God. But before this period we find little or no sense or truth in their religion. And the same remarks will apply to the Romans. Their gods were as detestable as they were numerous. Hesiod tells us they had thirty thousand. Temples were erected to all the passions, fears, diseases, to which humanity is subject. Their supreme god Jupiter was an adulterer, Mars a murderer, Mercury a thief, Bacchus a drunkard, Venus a harlot, and they attributed other crimes to their gods too horrible to be mentioned. Such gods were worshiped with appropriate ceremonies, of lust, drunkenness, and bloodshed. Their most sacred mysteries, carried on under the patronage of these licentious deities, were so abominable and infamous, that it was found necessary for the preservation of any remnant of good order, to prohibit them.

It may be supposed that the human race is grown wiser now than in the days of Socrates and Cicero, and that such abominations are no longer possible. Turn your eyes, then, to India, and behold one hundred and fifty millions of rational beings, possessed

* Diodorus Siculus, Book 1.

of "spiritual faculties," "insight," and "the religious sentiment," worshipping three hundred and thirty millions of gods, in the forms of hills and trees, and rivers, and rocks, elephants, tigers, monkeys and rats, crocodiles, serpents, beetles and ants, and monsters like to nothing in heaven or earth, or under the earth. Take one specimen of all. There is "the lord of the world," Juggernath. "When you think of the monster block of the idol, with its frightfully grim and distorted visage, so justly styled the Moloch of the East, sitting enthroned amid thousands of massive sculptures, the representative emblems of that cruelty and vice which constitute the very essence of his worship; when you think of the countless multitudes that annually congregate there, from all parts of India, many of them measuring the whole distance of their weary pilgrimage with their own bodies; when you think of the merit-earning assiduities constantly practised by crowds of devotees and religious mendicants, around the holy city: some remaining all day with their head on the ground, and their feet in the air; others with their bodies entirely covered with earth; some cramming their eyes with mud, and their mouths with straw, while others lie extended in a puddle of water; here one man lying with his foot tied to his neck, another with a pot of fire on his breast, a third enveloped in a network of ropes;—when, besides these self-inflicted torments, you think of the frightful amount of involuntary suffering and wretchedness arising from the exhaustion of toilsome pilgrimages, the cravings of famine, and the scourgings of pestilence;—when you think of the day of the high festival—how the horrid king is dragged forth from his temple, and mounted on his lofty car, in the presence of hundreds of thousands, that cause the very earth to shake with shouts of 'Victory to Juggernath, our Lord;'—how the officiating high priest, stationed in front of the elevated idol, commences the public service by a loathsome pantomimic exhibition, accompanied with the utterance of filthy, blasphemous songs, to which the vast multitude at intervals respond, not in the strains of tuneful melody, but in loud yells of approbation, united with a kind of hissing applause;—when you think of the carnage that ensues, in the name of sacred offering—how, as the ponderous machine rolls on, grating harsh thunder, one and another of the more enthusiastic devotees throw themselves beneath the wheels, and are instantly crushed to pieces, the infatu-

ated victims of hellish superstition;—when you think of the numerous Golgothas that bestud the neighboring plain, where the dogs, jackals and vultures seem to live on human prey; and of those bleak and barren sands that are for ever whitened with the skulls and bones of deluded pilgrims which lie bleaching in the sun,"*—you will be able to see an awful force of meaning in the words of our text, and to realize more fully the necessity of a revelation from God, for the very preservation of animal life to man. Literally, where there is no vision the people *perish*. Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God.

Take one other illustration of ignorance of God in the minds of those who close their eyes against the light of revelation—the heathen of Europe and America, possessing that inspiration which is wide as the world, looking abroad upon all the glorious works of the great Creator, and declaring there is no God. On the other hand, we have men, possessed of this same inspiration, deifying every thing, and outrunning even the Hindoos in the multitude of their divinities, declaring that every stick, and stone, and serpent, and snail that crawls on the earth is God, and making professions of holding spiritual communings with them all. To crown the monument of folly, the chief of the Positive Philosophy comes forth with a revelation from his spiritual faculties, in which by way of improving on the proverb "both are best," and of being sure of the truth, he unites Atheism, and Pantheism, and Idolatry—teaches his child to worship idols, the youth to believe in one God, and himself and other full-grown men to adore the "resultant of all the forces capable of voluntarily contributing to the perfectioning of the universe, *not forgetting his worthy friends, the animals.*" To such darkness are men justly condemned who shut their eyes against the light of God's revelation. Where there is no vision the people perish intellectually. He who turns away his ears from the truth, must be turned unto fables. "Hear ye and give ear, be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."

* Duff's India, p. 222.

Without a revelation from God, the mind of man can attain to no certainty regarding the most important of all his interests, the destiny of his immortal soul. He knows well—for every sickness, and sorrow, and calamity declares it, and quick returning troubles will not allow him to forget—that the Ruler of the world is offended with him; and conscience tells him why. The sense of guilt is common to the human race. This is, indeed, “the inspiration which knows no sect, no country, no religion, no age; which is as wide as humanity.” Reason asks herself, Will God be always thus angry with me? Shall I ever feel these pangs of remorse for my sins? Will misery follow me for ever, as I see and feel that it does here? Or shall my soul exist under God’s frowns, or perish under his just sentence, even as my body perishes? Does the grave hide for ever all that I loved? Have they ceased to be? Shall we ever meet again? Or must I say, “Farewell, farewell! An eternal farewell!” And in a few days myself also cease to be? The only answer reason gives, is—solemn silence.

The wisest of men could not tell. Who has not dropped a tear over the dying words of Socrates, “I am going out of the world, and you are to continue in it, but which of us has the better part is a secret to every one but God.” Cicero contended for the immortality of the soul against the multitudes of philosophers who denied it in his day; yet, after recounting their various opinions, he is obliged to say, “Which of these is true, God alone knows; and which is most probable, a very great question.”* And Seneca, on a review of this subject, says: “Immortality, however desirable, was rather promised than proved by these great men.” †

The multitude had but two ideas on the subject. Either their ghosts should wander eternally in the land of shadows, or else they would pass into a succession of other bodies, of animals or men. From the nakedness and desolation of unclothed spirit, and the possibility which this notion held out of some close contact with a holy and just judge, the soul shrank back to the hope of the metempsychosis, and hoped rather to dwell in the body of a brute, than be utterly unclothed and mingle with spirits. This is the delusion cherished by the people of India and many other lands to this day. How unsatisfactory to the dying sinner this

* Tusc. Quæst, lib. 1.

† Seneca, Ep. 102.

uncertainty. "Tell me," said a wealthy Hindoo, who had given all his wealth to the Brahmins who surrounded his dying bed, that they might obtain pardon for his sins, "Tell me what will become of my soul when I die?" "Your soul will go into the body of a holy cow." "And after that?" "It will pass into the body of the divine peacock." "And after that?" "It will pass into a flower." "Tell me, oh! tell me," cried the dying man, "where will it go last of all?" Where will it go last of all? Aye, that is the question reason can not answer.

The rejectors of the Bible here, are as uncertain on this all-important subject, as the heathen of India. They have every variety of oracles, and conjectures, and suppositions about the other world; but for their guesses they offer no proof. When they give us their oracles as if they were known truths, we are compelled to ask, How do you know? The only thing in which they are agreed among themselves, is in denying the resurrection of the body—a point which they gathered from their heathen classics. A poor, empty, naked, shivering, table-rapping spirit, obliged to fly over the world at the sigh of any silly sewing girl, or the bidding of some brazen-faced strumpet, is all that ever shall exist of Washington or Newton, in the scheme of one class of Bible rejectors. To obtain rest from such a doom, others fly to the eternal tomb, and inform us that the soul is simply an acting of the brain, and when the brain ceases to act, the soul ceases also. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. But even this hog philosophy is reasonable, compared with the dogma of the large majority, that a man may blaspheme, swear, lie, steal, murder, and commit adultery, and go straight to heaven—that "many a swarthy Indian who bowed down to wood and stone—many a grim-faced Calmuck who worshiped the great god of storms—many a Grecian peasant who did homage to Phœbus Apollo when the sun rose or went down—many a savage, his hands smeared all over with human sacrifice—shall sit down with Moses and Jesus in the kingdom of God."* To such wild unreason does the mind of man descend when it rejects the Bible.

Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. Where there is no vision, hope perishes. The only plausible creed for him

* Parker's Discourse, 83.

who rejects it, is the eternal tomb, and the heart-chilling inscription: "Death is an eternal sleep!"

Without a revelation from God, men are as ignorant how to live, as how to die. They have no rule of life having either truth or authority to direct them. Our Anglo Saxon ancestors, of the purity of whose blood we are so proud, trusted to their magical incantations for the cure of diseases, for the success of their tillage, for the discovery of lost property, for uncharming cattle and the prevention of casualties. One day was useful for all things; another, though good to tame animals, was baleful to sow seed. One day was favorable to the commencement of business, another to let blood, and others wore a forbidding aspect to these and other things. On this day they were to buy, on a second to sell, on a third to hunt, on a fourth to do nothing. If a child was born on such a day, it would live; if on another, its life would be sickly; if on another, it would perish early.* Their descendants who reject the Bible are fully as superstitious. Astrologers, and Mediums, and Clairvoyants, in multitudes, find a profitable trade among them; and one prominent anti-Bible lecturer will cure you of any disease you have, if you will only enclose, in a letter, a lock of hair from the right temple, and—a—Five Dollar Bill.

The precepts of even the wisest men, and the laws of the best regulated states, commanded or approved of vice. In Babylon prostitution was compulsory on every female. The Carthaginian law required human sacrifices. When Agathoclas besieged Carthage, two hundred children, of the most noble families, were murdered by the command of the senate, and three hundred citizens voluntarily sacrificed themselves to Saturn.† The laws of Sparta required theft, and the murder of unhealthy children. Those of ancient Rome allowed parents the power of killing their children, if they pleased. At Athens, the capital of heathen literature and philosophy, it was enacted "that infants which appeared to be maimed should be either killed or exposed."‡

Plato, dissatisfied with the constitution, made a scheme of one much better, which he has left us in his Republic. In this great advance of society, this heathen millennium, we find that there was

* Turner's Anglo Saxons, b. vii, chap. 13.

† Aristotle, Polit. lib. vii, chap. 17.

‡ Diodorus Siculus, b. xx, chap. 14.

to be a community of women and of property, just as among our modern heathens. Women's rights were to be maintained by having the women trained to war. Children were still to be murdered, if convenience called for it. And the young children were to be led to battle at a safe distance, "that the young whelps might early scent carnage, and be inured to slaughter."

The teachings of all these philosophers were immoral. He may lie, says Plato, who knows how to do it. Pride and the love of popular applause were esteemed the best motives to virtue. Profane swearing was commanded by the example of all their best writers and moralists. Oaths are frequent in the writings of Plato and Seneca. The gratification of the sensual appetites was openly taught. Anstippus taught that a wise man might steal and commit adultery, when he could. Unnatural crimes were vindicated. The last dread crime—suicide—was pleaded for by Cicero and Seneca as the mark of a hero, and Demosthenes, Cato, Brutus, and Cassius, carried the means of self-destruction about them, that they might not fall alive into the hands of their enemies.

The lives of these wisest of the heathen corresponded to their teachings, so far at least as vice was concerned. The most notorious vices, and even unnatural crimes, were practiced by them. The reader of the classics does not need to be reminded that such vices are lauded in the poems of Ovid, and Horace, and Virgil; that the poets were rewarded and honored for songs which would not be tolerated for a moment in the vilest theater of New York. What, then, must the lives of the vulgar have been? In the very height of Roman civilization, Trajan caused ten thousand men to hew each other to pieces for the amusement of the Roman people; and noble ladies feasted their eyes on the spectacle. In the Augustan age, when the invincible armies of Rome gave law to half the world, fathers were in the habit of mutilating their sons rather than see them subjected to the slavery and terrible despotism of their officers. What, then, must the state of the people of the vanquished countries have been? Whole provinces were frequently given over to fire and sword by generals, not reputed inhuman; and such was the progress of war and anarchy, and their never-failing accompaniments, famine and pestilence, that in the reign of Gallienus, large cities were left utterly desolate, the public roads became unsafe from immense packs of wolves, *and it was computed that one-half of the human race perished.* This was just before the

toleration of Christianity. God would allow the wisest and bravest of mankind to try the experiment of neglecting his gospel and living without his revelation, until all mankind might be convinced that such a course is suicidal to nations. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

A brief reference to the codes of morals which the opposers of the Bible would substitute for it in Christian lands, shall conclude our proof of the necessity of such a revelation of God's law to man, as shall guide his life to peace and happiness.

The family is the basis of the commonwealth. Destroy family confidence and family government, and you destroy society, subvert civil government, and bring destruction on the human race. Mankind are so generally agreed on this subject, that adultery, even among heathens, is regarded and punished as a crime. The whole school of infidel writers and anti-Bible lecturers, male and female, apologize for, and vindicate this crime. Lord Herbert, the first of the English Deists, taught that the indulgence of lust and anger is no more to be blamed than the thirst occasioned by the dropsy, or the drowsiness produced by lethargy. Mr. Hobbes asserted that every man has a right to all things, and may lawfully get them if he can. Bolingbroke taught that man is merely a superior animal, which is just the modern development theory, and that his chief end is to gratify the appetites and inclinations of the flesh. Hume, whose argument against miracles is so frequently in the mouths of American Infidels, taught that adultery must be practiced, if men would obtain all the advantages of life, and that if practiced frequently, it would by degrees come to be thought no crime at all—a prediction as true as holy writ, the fulfilment of which hundreds of the citizens of Cincinnati can attest, who have heard a lecturer publicly denounce the Bible as an immoral book, and in the same address declare that if a woman was married to a man, in her opinion of inferior development, it was her duty to leave him and live with another. This duty is by no means neglected, as the numerous divorces, spiritual marriages, separations, and elopements among this class of persons, testify. Voltaire held that it was not agreeable to policy to regard it as a vice in a moral sense. Rousseau, a liar, a thief, and a debauched profligate, according to his own printed "Confessions," held the same high opinion of the inner light as our American Spiritualists. "*I have only to consult myself,*" said he, "*concerning what I do. All*

*that I feel to be right, is right."** In fact, the purport of this inner light doctrine, is exactly as Rousseau expressed it, and amounts simply to this, *Do what you like.*

On this lawless principle these men acted. Take, for example, the chief saint on the calendar of American Infidelity, whose birthday is annually celebrated by a high festival in this city, and in whose honor hundreds of men, who would like to be reputed decent citizens, parade our streets in solemn procession—Thomas Paine—the author of "*The Age of Reason*," as his character is depicted by one who was his helper in the work of blaspheming God and seducing men, and whose testimony, therefore, in the eyes of an infidel, is unimpeachable—William Carver.

"MR. THOMAS PAINE: I received your letter, dated the 25 ult., in answer to mine, dated November 21, and after minutely examining its contents, I found that you had taken to the pitiful subterfuge of *lying* for your defence. You say that you paid me four dollars per week for your board and lodging, during the time you were with me, prior to the first of June last; which was the day that I went up, by your order, to bring you to York, from New Rochelle. It is fortunate for me that I have a living evidence that saw you give me five guineas, and no more, in my shop, at your departure at that time; but you said you would have given me more, but that you had no more with you at present. You say, also, that you found your own liquors during the time you boarded with me; but you should have said, 'I found only a small part of the liquor I drank during my stay with you; this part I purchased of John Fellows, which was a demi-john of brandy, containing four gallons, and this did not serve you three weeks.' This can be proved, and I mean not to say any thing I cannot prove, for I hold truth as a precious jewel. It is a well known fact that you drank one quart of brandy per day, at my expense, during the different times you boarded with me; the demi-john above mentioned excepted, and the last fourteen weeks you were sick. Is not this a supply of liquor for dinner and supper." * * * * "I have often wondered that a French woman and three children should leave France and all their connections, to follow Thomas Paine to America. Suppose I were to go to my native country, England, and take another man's wife and three children of his, and leave my wife and children in this country. What would be the natural conclusion in the minds of the people, but that there was some criminal connection between the woman and myself?" †

Such is the morality of those who denounce the Bible as an im-

* Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures, Vol. I, p. 25.

† Printed repeatedly in the New York newspapers, and given entire in the Report of the discussion between Dr. Berg and Mr. Barker. W. S. Young, Philadelphia, 1854.

moral book, and blaspheme the God of the Bible as too unholy to be revered or adored! "But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit." In the Free Love Institute about to be established in our vicinity, we shall have the full development of these filthy principles and practices.

Let fathers and husbands look to this matter. Especially let ungodly men set to work and devise some law of man capable of binding those who renounce the law of God, and with it all human authority. For there can be no law of man, unless there is a revealed law of God. "What right," says the Pantheist, the Fourierist, the Spiritualist, the Atheist, "what right have you to command me? Right and wrong are only matters of feeling, and your feelings are no rule to me. The will of the majority is only the law of might, and if I can evade it, or overcome it, my will is as good as theirs. Oaths are only an idle superstition—there is no judge, no judgment, no punishment for the false swearer." Take away the moral sanction of law, and the sacredness of oaths, and what basis have you left for any government, save the point of the bayonet? Take away the revealed law of God, and you leave not a vestige of any authority to any human law. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," said the immortal framers of the basis of the American Confederation, "that all men are created equal; that they are *endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable rights." It was well said. The Rights of God, are the only basis of the Rights of Man.

Once in modern times, the rejectors of the Bible had opportunity to try the experiment of ruling a people on a large scale, and giving the world a specimen of an infidel republic. You have heard one of them here express his admiration of that government, and declare his intention to present a public vindication of it. Of course, as soon as practicable, that which they admire they will imitate, and the scenes of Paris and Lyons will be re-enacted in Louisville and Cincinnati. Our Bibles will be collected and burned on a dung heap. Death will be declared an eternal sleep. God will be declared a fiction. Religious worship will be renounced; the Sabbath abolished; and a prostitute, crowned with garlands, will receive the adorations of the Mayors and Council-

men of Cincinnati and Newport. The reign of terror will commence. The guillotine shall take its place on the Fifth Street Market place. Proscription will follow proscription. Women will denounce their husbands, and children their parents, as bad citizens, and lead them to the axe; and well dressed ladies, filled with savage ferocity, will seize the mangled bodies of their murdered countrymen between their teeth. The Licking will be choked with the bodies of men, and the Ohio dyed with their blood; and those whose infancy had sheltered them from the fire of the rabble soldiery, be bayoneted as they cling to the knees of their destroyers.* The common doom of man commuted for the violence of the sword, the bayonet, the sucking boat, and the guillotine; the knell of the nation tolled, and the world summoned to its execution and funeral, will need no preacher to expound the text, *Where there is no vision the people perish.*

*Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures, vol. i, p. 26; where ample references to cotemporary French writers are given.

NOTICE.

April, 1857.

The American Reform Tract and Book Society is progressing in efforts to spread Truth and Godliness, and promote action on all great moral questions, and more especially, the great question of Freedom and Slavery. Some thirty Tracts, and fifteen books, have been published. Arrangements are made for increasing this number just as fast as funds are provided.

Office and Depository, No. 28 West Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

G. L. WEED, *Cor. Sec. and Treas.*

AMERICAN REFORM TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, CINCINNATI, OHIO.